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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: TAIWAN'S CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND  
CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS.

¶1. Summary: Taiwan dailies (October 4) focused on U.S. worries about Taiwan's constitutional reform. The pro-status quo "China Times" front-paged that "The United States has urged President Chen Shui-bian through three channels not to touch the 'red line' in constitutional reform."

¶2. In terms of editorials, the pro-unification "United Daily News" editorialized that President Chen Shui-bian's attempt at constitutional reform has infuriated the United States. The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" said in its editorial that an informal tourism agreement between Taiwan and China might be stalled because of the recent traffic accident involving mainland Chinese tourists in central Taiwan. End summary.

¶3. The pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (10/04) that:

"Taiwan's New Constitution is Fake; [the fact that] it has infuriated the United States is True"

"The DPP will send a draft for constitutional reform to its Central Executive Committee. Days ago, Chen Shui-bian claimed that 'the territorial boundaries must be defined pragmatically,' and the United States immediately made strong responses. U.S. Department of State spokesmen used strong words twice, and every sentence pointed to Chen Shui-bian; the language even expressed strong doubts about Chen Shui-bian's competence and legitimacy.

"... In the midst of the Anti-Bian Action, strong words from the U.S. government not only directly question Chen Shui-bian's competence to lead the country, but they also echo 'anti-Bian' actions. This is a piece of evidence that Chen Shui-bian has really infuriated the United States.

"... Why does Chen Shui-bian always want to use a 'fake issue' such as 'constitutional reform for Taiwan independence' in exchange for 'real damages' in Taiwan-U.S. relations? This kind of political thinking is really difficult to comprehend. Over the past six years, whenever the President attempted to cross the 'restricted area for constitutional reform,' the United States struck back; and the United States took stronger and stronger actions each time. If constitutional reform has ever had any space for the development of Taiwan independence, the United States has almost blocked it and left no room for it. This time, Chen Shui-bian is humiliated again; the space for Taiwan independence is being blocked again. Moreover, it is a further deterioration of relations between the United States and the DPP's Taiwan independence forces. ..."

¶4. "Accident May Stall Tourism Agreement"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post"

[circulation: 30,000] editorialized (10/04):

"The crash of a tourist bus carrying mainland Chinese tourists in central Taiwan's Nantou County was a tragic accident that took the lives of five tourists and their Taiwanese tour guide.

"But if the fallout from the accident is not handled properly, this tragedy has the potential to derail a long-awaited informal tourism agreement between Taipei and Beijing.

"In recent months, following our government's decision to allow mainland Chinese residents to make tourist visits to Taiwan, governments on both sides have signaled a willingness to let tourism business leaders work out arrangements that would normalize the process for mainland tourists to visit Taiwan. Since both governments are still in no mood to negotiate directly with each other, Taipei and Beijing have instead indicated they will allow private tourism associations to work out a private sector agreement.

"... In the end, officials here should work to treat injured mainland tourists and relatives of the deceased victims in the same way that we would want Taiwanese to be treated if the same accident happened on the mainland.

"By giving this incident high priority, our government can demonstrate sincerity that one hopes could overcome any setbacks so that an agreement can still be reached."

WANG